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LETTER DATED 8 MAY 1995 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

President Izetbegovic's letter of yesterday, 7 May 1995 (S/1995/364) once again called the Council's attention to the incessant shelling and deliberate targeting of civilian areas in Sarajevo. In this instance, the target was the Sarajevo suburb of Hrasnica, well within the so-called "exclusion zone", and also at the base of the blue route and Mount Igman.

Although the latest shelling was especially devastating, resulting in dozens of dead and wounded civilians, it is by no means an isolated or even rare incident. This Sarajevo suburb is one of the linchpins of the blue route and of the lifeline to Sarajevo. While the Pale Serbs have been allowed to shut down Sarajevo airport, they have attempted to complete their strangulation of Sarajevo by shelling and sniping along the blue route, a direct violation of Security Council resolutions, the "exclusion zone" and the demilitarization agreements regarding Mount Igman.

These facts and strategy are fully known to the personnel of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) responsible for United Nations operations and decisions within our Republic. During my recent visit to Sarajevo, I participated in our Government's dialogue with the most senior UNPROFOR representatives, the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Akashi, General Janvier, and General Smith. In the meeting, our government representatives once again demanded that this escalating strangulation be put to an end. In both the instances of the Pale Serb threats and the attacks on Sarajevo airport and on the blue route, these senior representatives of the Council claimed impotence and even a lack of mandate, describing their authority, rules of engagement, as being "purely peace-keeping".

With all due respect, there is no mention of "peace-keeping" in any of the Security Council resolutions giving UNPROFOR its authority, but rather specific mandates, including to keep the airport open and stop the shelling of Sarajevo, including under Chapter VII. We dare say the impotence is caused by a lack of political will and describing UNPROFOR's mandate as "purely peace-keeping" is an exercise in unauthorized redefining of the Security Council's resolutions.

During my recent visit to Sarajevo and quest to participate in the aforementioned meeting with UNPROFOR, I had the opportunity to experience first-hand this lack of will to fulfil UNPROFOR's most basic commitment. In lieu of taking effective measures to stop attacks upon the lower segment of the blue route, UNPROFOR agreed to transport in its armoured personnel carrier (APC), H.E. Mr. Ejup Ganic, member of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Presidency and Vice President of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and myself down the most dangerous lower section of the road. When we arrived to the designated meeting place, unexplainably we were informed that UNPROFOR now would not come to pick us up and transport us down. A few hours earlier that day, at the bottom stretch of the blue route, a Bosnian car had been shot up by Serbian machine-gun fire and its driver effectively decapitated. Without the benefit of UNPROFOR APCs, and the clear precedent of the dead driver, we were left with no other choice but to proceed the last couple of kilometres down the mountain on foot. As we started, consecutive mortar shells started coming in from Serbian positions. The communications with UNPROFOR had been monitored by the Serbians and, knowing our vulnerability, we were now being directly targeted.

Putting aside dramatics, we made it down the mountain to the relative safety of the buildings of Hrasnica village. A Bosnian woman gathering wood on the mountain was less lucky. One of the mortar shells, a 120 mm whose remnants we picked up, inflicted ghastly wounds to the woman's legs and side from which she would be left horribly maimed. If we did not hear her feeble pleas for help as we ran down the hill, she would have suffered a long and painful death.

When we arrived at Hrasnica, we found the UNPROFOR APCs and soldiers in a sheltered area. They informed us that, although their orders had been initially to pick us up at the top of Mount Igman, their orders were subsequently verbally changed not to proceed.

The Bosnian Government does not assume that its officials have an inalienable right to be transported by UNPROFOR. However, we do assume that UNPROFOR will live up to its mandate and related commitments. Unfortunately, the safe area and "exclusion zone" around Sarajevo, including the blue route, are not being honoured. Neither is UNPROFOR observing its agreement with the Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina to deploy its forces preventively along the blue route in exchange for the previous removal of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina from this area. Lacking the fulfilment of these more comprehensive mandates and commitments, by default we had to rely upon UNPROFOR's safe transport. As I have already indicated, unfortunately even this last "substitute" commitment was ultimately not honoured.

Perhaps, in a moment of personal vulnerability and rage, I vowed that I would recommend to my Government to redeploy its troops and weapons from where they had been withdrawn in the agreement with UNPROFOR. Then, I became concerned that my recommendation may have been too prejudiced by personal experience. However, after yesterday's shelling of Hrasnica along the blue route and the consequent murder of the civilians, I am of the view that the only option left for our Government is to redeploy fully upon Mount Igman and respond to Serbian attacks in kind against their military positions. Therefore, I wiil

make such a recommendation in view of the ongoing lack of will on the part of those who are otherwise mandated to deter and respond.

For those members of the Council who consider this letter too disrespectful or lacking in normal diplomatic tact, I beforehand express my sadness for the fact that the entire Council has to suffer our anger, indignation and frustration. None the less, it is the Council as a whole that is responsible; that is being undermined in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina; and that has been increasingly hijacked by a few responsible Powers. Therefore, please do not look our way to express your displeasure. Look to those who are responsible for executing the Council's mandate and maintaining the authority and integrity of the Council at the highest level, ask them the relevant questions and express to them your indignation.

May I ask for your kind assistance in distributing this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Muhamed SACIRBEY
Permanent Representative